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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000393

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2017
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [LH](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: LITHUANIAN DEFENSE MINISTER REQUESTS HELP IN
AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN CLOUD FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) On May 28, Ambassador Cloud and Defense Attache met with Lithuanian Minister of Defense Juozas Olekas (other issues discussed to be provided septel). Olekas requested U.S. help in getting Lithuanian Joint Tactical Air Controllers (JTAC) certified by NATO. He said that some of Lithuania's SOF soldiers who are about to deploy have been trained on these skills in the United States, although they are not permitted to use them in Afghanistan because they have not been certified by NATO. Also, he understood that USAID funding for civilian projects in Ghor Province will decrease. Lithuania intends to double its national contribution for these projects next year. He asked that USAID maintain or increase its funding in this very poor province.

¶2. (C) Olekas also voiced concern that the Afghan government intends to rebuild the runway at Chagcharan. The runway is currently a dirt strip. If the planned "improvement" takes place, larger aircraft such as C-130s will not be able to use the airfield because the pavement will not be thick enough. Olekas said that, ironically, the runway is more capable now than it will be after the planned reconstruction. He asked the USG to influence the Afghan government to improve the runway to a level that can support C-130 aircraft.

CLOUD